| 1  | UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  |
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| 2  | DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS   |
| 3  | No. 1:18-cv-12217-WGY   |
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| 5  | JOSEPH A. CARI,   |
| 6  | Plaintiff   |
| 7  | vs.   |
| 8  |   |
| 9  | MEDCAP GROWTH EQUITY, et al,  |
| 10 | Defendants  |
| 11 |   |
| 12 | *****   |
| 13 | For Hearing Before:   |
| 14 | Judge William G. Young<br>At Suffolk University Law School                      |
| 15 |   |
| 16 | Motion to Dismiss   |
| 17 | United States District Court  |
| 18 | District of Massachusetts (Boston)<br>One Courthouse Way                        |
| 19 | Boston, Massachusetts 02210<br>Tuesday, March 5, 2019                           |
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| 23 | REPORTER: RICHARD H. ROMANOW, RPR<br>Official Court Reporter                    |
| 24 | United States District Court<br>One Courthouse Way, Room 5510, Boston, MA 02210 |
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PROCEEDINGS 1 2 (Begins, 2:05 p.m.) 3 THE COURT: Now hearing Civil Matter 18-12217, 4 Cari vs. MedCap. 5 MS. DOWNEY: Good afternoon, your Honor, 6 Alicia Downey for the defendants. 7 MR. MERRY: May it please the Court, my name is Paul Merry, I'm representing -- as local counsel 8 representing the plaintiff, Mr. Joseph Cari, in this 9 10 case, one of the opponents to the motion. 11 MR. GILLESPIE: Your Honor, may it please the Court, Hal Gillespie from Gillespie, Rozen & Watsky in 12 13 Dallas, Texas, um, lead counsel for the party opposing 14 the motion. 15 THE COURT: All right. Let me see if -- the way the briefing has gone, 16 let me see if I've got this right, and this is how I 17 18 propose to proceed. 19 This is the defendants' motion. Plaintiffs have 20 moved to amend. The defendants have promptly opposed 21 that on the ground that the amendment is a futility. 22 I've read all the briefs. I'm going to work from the 23 proposed amended complaint, and naturally if it fails, 24 um, there's nothing more to be done.

I'll hear in support of the motion to dismiss.

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MS. DOWNEY: Okay. If I could use the podium? 1 2 THE COURT: Of course. 3 MS. DOWNEY: Thank you. Good afternoon, your Honor. 4 5 The, um, what's before you now is a proposed amended complaint that was submitted while a pending 6 7 motion to dismiss was on file. 8 THE COURT: Yes, and I'm --9 MS. DOWNEY: And I'm just --THE COURT: -- I'm not troubled by that. 10 11 MS. DOWNEY: I know you just said that, I'm just -- the, um -- so I understand that they actually 12 don't oppose dismissal of the complaint. I did raise, 13 you know, the notion that two of the counts from the 14 15 original complaint have been abandoned, so I do think the docket should reflect that, at the very least. But 16 17 what's proposed in that complaint still has deficiencies, they are fatal deficiencies, 18 19 notwithstanding what are clear attempts to --20 THE COURT: Let's see if we -- what's 21 abandoned here? Just so we're clear. 22 MS. DOWNEY: The, um -- from the original 23 complaint there was a fifth cause of action for breach 24 of fiduciary duty against Mr. Velis individually that is 25 gone, um, and there is also the seventh cause of action

for an accounting that is also gone --

THE COURT: That's what I understand.

MS. DOWNEY: -- and it should be gone with prejudice for the reasons that I had previously argued. It's not merely a deficiency in pleading, but the failure to state any substantive --

THE COURT: You proceed.

MS. DOWNEY: The problem with the proposed amended complaint -- um, and I'll just start with the low-hanging fruit, it still claims a cause of action under Chapter 93A, the Consumer Protection Act, based on the disputes that are outlined in the proposed amended complaint. The plaintiff's own opposition and, um, brief in support of its motion to amend the complaint states expressly that the basis of this claim was the fraudulent inducement of Mr. Cari to move him out of his management job with the loss of his salary and into a consulting role. As I see it, that's a straight-up employer/employee dispute not within Chapter 93A.

The other part, the two-part scheme that both pleadings allege was an effort, an unsuccessful effort to persuade Mr. Cari to give up his equity interest in the limited liability company, which is also a defendant in this case, efforts made by the company in which he is part owner and another co-owner of the company. That is

purely an intracorporate dispute again. And the case law is clear, as a matter of law, that it's outside the scope of 93A. And so I do think that claim too is ripe for dismissal with prejudice even if you do allow the, um -- and that's why maybe the complaint is --

THE COURT: All right, so let's -- maybe you want to come to the harder ones.

MS. DOWNEY: Yes, the harder ones. They are hard, and the reason they're hard is because, um, you know I bear a burden as the movant on a motion to dismiss. We've got essentially contract claims and fraudulent or negligent inducement based on misrepresentation claims. Let's look at the contract claims first.

The original complaint referenced, um, Attachment A, which was a term sheet, the starred show, that attachment was not actually appendaged to the complaint that was filed, but it was served on us, and that attachment was then filed with the Court as Exhibit B to our motion to dismiss with redactions of specific financial information. That exhibit is signed by only one party, it is signed by Mr. Cari. And so naturally when I moved to dismiss, I thought of a brilliant argument that, "Hey, it's not signed by both parties."

That's the basis of that argument.

Now a proposed amended complaint comes in with the new allegations that in fact a term sheet similar to this one was signed by both parties at an earlier date.

Nobody has it. I can tell you in open court, I don't have it, my clients don't have it, their lawyers don't have it.

Now --

THE COURT: But it's a motion to dismiss -MS. DOWNEY: It's a motion to dismiss, so
let's credit the allegations.

THE COURT: -- and I take their obligations under Rule 11 very seriously and I know they do.

MS. DOWNEY: Um-hum.

THE COURT: So isn't it adequate pleading?

Even if it doesn't exist, um, if it did exist and a jury were to believe it existed and was breached, a recovery could follow.

MS. DOWNEY: Let's assume that was the case, um, it still doesn't create an enforceable contract with respect to the terms that are outlined. It is -- it would be a signed agreement to negotiate in good faith necessary agreements to conclude, you know, the terms that are in here. It sets forth, quote, unquote, "the principal terms of what they negotiated as a new arrangement," it sets forth the general terms, that's

all they're agreeing to. And this -- and this is a four-corners-of-the-complaint question of law, an interpretation-of-the-contract argument, that as I read their opposition, and they agree it's just a question of law that can be decided at this stage of the case.

They say the unambiguous language reflects that it was a final agreement as to all essential terms. I have given you cases that suggest that this same type of language that we see in this term sheet and that, crediting the new allegations, was also contained in the earlier term sheet --

THE COURT: But shouldn't -- you say I can deal with this as a matter of law, and of course today it's a matter of law whether we call it "dismissal" or "summary judgment," but I have some problem with -- recognizing that I can look at the term sheet because reference is made to it, I'm going to look at that, um, and I have to give all intendments their way.

Wouldn't it be better to resolve it, if it can be resolved, as a matter of law on a motion for summary judgment?

MS. DOWNEY: Not if the language is unambiguous. If the language is unambiguous, it is the language that decides that question, not allegations about subjective beliefs, what are the parties course of

dealing, or anything like that. If you decide the language is ambiguous, then it's a question for summary judgment.

THE COURT: All right.

MS. DOWNEY: Now my time is running out.

On the breach of the implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing, the law there -- and I think both in Massachusetts and Delaware, and I've made the case that it is Delaware law that applies here and not Massachusetts law, but I think it's true under either of the states' law that the breach of the implied covenant has to attach to something in the term sheet, it has to govern the manner of performance of some term in the term sheet. And here the breach of implied duty claim boils down to simply breach of the term sheet, it's the same thing, it's not breach of implied duty, and that claim can be dismissed for failure to state a claim.

The fraud claims. Many many problems there including under Rule 9(b). I still don't know -- and I'm the defendants's lawyer, I'm going to have to answer this complaint, I'm going to have to investigate these claims, but who said exactly what? With three exceptions. And I'm quoting the brief.

THE COURT: You have --

MS. DOWNEY: There is language in quotes,

there was a document that's submitted as being a fraudulent statement, the term sheet itself is characterized as a false promise. I know what it says. Everything else is described in general terms -- and just described. I don't know who said what. I also have no basis in this proposed amended complaint for concluding that the speakers or the writers knew of the falsity of the statements. That is a requirement.

THE COURT: Well that's a requirement for fraudulent misrepresentation, but on this pleading can I not infer it? You see I've got a pleading.

MS. DOWNEY: Right, but what specific facts allow you to refer that is missing, it's all alleged in conclusory terms, "They stated falsely," "They lied," "They tricked Cari," they -- you know that's just a conclusion, that's not enough.

On the negligent misrepresentation claim, I think it says "clear-cut as to breach of implied duty," there's elements that you need to have for that claim under Delaware law, which is a special relationship, special equities, like a fiduciary relationship, or a lawyer/client relationship, it is absent from this complaint. We have individuals, sophisticated business people represented by counsel.

On the Massachusetts formulation, "acting in the

course of business," it's an investment firm. Mr. Velis is the manager of an investment firm. Mr. Cari is not his customer, he is not an investor, he is not somebody to whom he is selling services.

THE COURT: Let's give him a --

MS. DOWNEY: That falls out, um, regardless of what you feel about whether the misrepresentations qualify as representations of fact or not.

THE COURT: Well let's give them a chance.

And let me tee this up and see if you're satisfied with this.

I'm going to turn to them now.

MS. DOWNEY: Oh, okay, I think my 10 minutes is probably up. Thank you.

THE COURT: One, I think that was a good presentation, and when you start, I think she's right that Delaware law applies, but there can't be a claim for a violation of Massachusetts General Laws, and I don't see any negligent misrepresentation claim here.

But if I let the other three go, and I'm not saying I'm going to, I have some questions about it.

But if I let the other three go, breach of contract, breach of the covenant of good faith, and fair dealing under Delaware law, and fraudulent misrepresentation, you're fine with that, aren't you?

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MR. GILLESPIE: I'm greedy, your Honor, I
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     would prefer to have more. I would prefer to --
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                THE COURT: Well of course you would. But as
     a practical matter?
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                MR. GILLESPIE: Your Honor, Mr. --
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                THE COURT: Merry.
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                MR. GILLESPIE: -- Merry, Paul Merry, is going
     to argue the 93A part and the Delaware law part, and so
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     I'd rather not step on his toes even though I got his
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     name wrong.
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                THE COURT: So we'll hear from him.
           And let me ask you this. If you are going for all
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     of it, how possibly do you think you can support a
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     negligent misrepresentation claim here?
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                MR. GILLESPIE: Well that's where discovery
     comes in. And if you read all of the pleadings, and if
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     we incorporated everything and pulled them all into the
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     negligent misrepresentation piece of this, um, then
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     you're caught with a choice, either these were
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     deliberate lies that Velis was making to Cari --
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                THE COURT: And I -- I started you out saying,
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     "Well at least to the extent they're adequately pleaded,
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     we'll let that one go forward."
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           How do you get negligent misrepresentation in
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     addition?
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MR. GILLESPIE: Your Honor, I think that if they're not deliberate lies, then they're negligent lies, because, um -- and I think that's got to be the fall-back position.

THE COURT: "Negligent lies"?

MR. GILLESPIE: Your Honor, let me --

THE COURT: I'm not familiar with "negligent

lies"?

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MR. GILLESPIE: Well let me point to the distinction that counsel may not have picked up on. just read their brief and they filed it at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, so I've had a chance to look at their brief, but just barely, and one of the things that they missed was a significant distinction between the way this was pled to begin with and the way this has been pled in the amended complaint, and that is that what the lie was about, not that they had a commitment, um, but that Velis represented that he had a commitment. In fact there may not have been a commitment, the investment didn't get made. But Velis said, "I have a commitment," that is a statement of fact. If in fact there wasn't a commitment, but Velis said there was, then that may be negligent or it may be deliberate. That's what discovery's going to have to get into.

But for Twombly purposes and Iqbal purposes, we've

pled this specifically as any pleading I've ever made, and I've been doing this a long time. This has got a lot of detail in it and it's not just conclusions. But there is a place for discovery once you've pled a plausible claim.

We -- you're more familiar with *Iqbal* and *Twombly* than most are, but this is a pleading that would get the doors of discovery open.

I want to say that --

THE COURT: What do you say to, um -- forgive my interruption, but I need the question answered.

What do you say to her argument, which would seemed rather cogent, that you either have a contract claim or you don't, and what is the breach of the implied covenant of good faith or fair dealing?

As I understand it, unless I've missed something, in Delaware law that cause of action is, as she properly stated, "in the performance of a contractual duty," it's the same thing, you either win or lose on the contract. What's -- what more should I be looking at for the breach of an implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing?

MR. GILLESPIE: Yeah, great question. And once you have the term sheet, then you've got -- you're setting up the consulting agreement, and in fact that

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means a business relationship with it. At that point there was a transmogrification occurred -- a "transformation," I think that's a better word, Cari used to be a member of this LLC, but then he stopped being a member, he resigned, and he became a consultant. Once he becomes a consultant and his job is to go out and make and get investments and thereby possibly trigger a \$2.5 million payoff for himself, then they have an obligation not to get in the way, they have an obligation not to send him a cease-and-desist letter, they have an obligation not to threaten him if he does the job, the work the consultant would do, and there's an implied covenant of good faith and fair dealing that once you made a deal, you don't do things that would kill the deal. THE COURT: And that's the misconduct that triggers that cause of action? MR. GILLESPIE: Yes, sir. And can I point something out because I'm almost out of time and I --THE COURT: No, go right ahead. MR. GILLESPIE: One thing, and it's important. I have learned, since filing the proposed amended complaint, that Sam Hebert has actually got out of the members category within the LCC in February of 2017.

Again we haven't had discovery, but I have learned that we have to amend this complaint one more time at least. Because one of the things they keep talking about is how Mr. Hebert has to have said "Yes" to this term-sheet deal in order to have a proper ratification under the LCC, either or without. So the only person who had to say "Yes" was Velis who remained the one member of the LCC. That's important because it knocks out a whole lot of their argument. It's a question of fact. We would have pled it better if we had known the --

THE COURT: I agree, it's a question of fact. One last question and then we'll go to Mr. Merry.

What about the Rule 9(b), pleading fraud with particularity? Suppose I allowed the claim for fraudulent misrepresentation, but limited it to the term sheet and the other allegations that are supported with quotes, isn't that appropriate under 9(b) here?

MR. GILLESPIE: Your Honor, I think under 9(b), as long as you plead it sufficiently to go forward, then you're entitled to do your discovery. And one of the things that struck me is when you read her -- opposing counsel's brief that was just filed, um, they take -- they basically take our allegations and they restate them leaving out a lot and saying some things that aren't even in the allegations.

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THE COURT: No, but when you say -- you've got this idea that when you get -- that everything's going to be in discovery. Isn't the way 9(b) should work is I should limit you to what's properly pled, you, um, go forward on that claim, if discovery gives rise to other things, then you timely move to amend? MR. GILLESPIE: Your Honor, obviously I can live with that. That's a priority. THE COURT: All right. Let's hear from Mr. Merry. MR. GILLESPIE: All right, thank you, your Honor. MR. MERRY: Good afternoon, your Honor. I feel a little bit at a disadvantage since the Court has indicated that --THE COURT: As you well know, you're not really at a disadvantage, and further -- and I say this in a sense to be helpful. I think this issue of which law applies is complex. I gave you my tendency, because it is. I think the easier argument for her is the 93A. Now I've been transparent as I know how. So you use your 5 minutes wisely. MR. MERRY: Thank you, your Honor. Just to touch back on the choice of law issue though, the defendants' brief actually acknowledges on

Page 7 that choice of law does not affect the determination of this motion. So I agree it's complex, um, and in our response we outline some bases based primarily on the recent <code>Hernandez</code> case from the Massachusetts SJC basically saying that Massachusetts will not always enforce these choice of law agreements that are made in some of these documents, depending on all the circumstances. And I think, of course completely -- you have complete agreement from me that it's a complex issue, however they did do an analysis there and they came out on the side that would favor our position.

To talk briefly about the 93A claim, um, I'm having trouble seeing how it doesn't apply here.

THE COURT: Because there's no trade or commerce and because it's either, as she says, it's employer/employee or it's between the members of the LLC. It doesn't -- even if the weight of this is physically in Massachusetts, there are limits to 93A.

MR. MERRY: Well that's not what we thought back in the AG's office 100 years ago. But aside from that, your Honor.

THE COURT: And, yes, Mr. Merry, those were the days.

(Laughter.)

THE COURT: But you and I both live with the law as it now stands.

MR. MERRY: Yes, we have to, your Honor, but I don't think it's against us.

Specifically Section 11 talks in terms of services

-- in fact "services" is the first word that's mentioned
when it defines "trade or commerce" in Section 11,

"services." I failed to bring it to the podium, but I
have a copy of the statute here, if it will be helpful.

Moreover, the assertion that, um, that this is not a business transaction, um, my sister herself said that Mr. Cari was being moved from his position.

THE COURT: The words are not is "is it a business transaction," the words are "in trade or commerce" This isn't -- this is either employee or employer or it's the structural organization of a business entity, it is not engaged -- I mean I'm talking in conclusory terms, but I think I'm giving your complaint every fair inference.

But go ahead.

MR. MERRY: Well I -- I -- my understanding of Section 11 is that it defines -- actually Section 1 where the definition appears that defines what is "trade or commerce" and includes services such as consultants.

As far as Mr. Cari's role is concerned, it's clear

not only that he was being induced to leave his position, which, by the way, he ceases being an employee when that happens, and he is moved into this consultant role, which is, I think, alluded to at least in the term sheet. But beyond that our allegations include a statement by defendant Velis that he says to Mr. Cari, and I'm only paraphrasing, "You'd better go get your plans made for your -- get your certificate for your LLC, because you're going to be" -- now this is my gloss on that, "that you are going to be a separate business that we're contracting with, so we want to contract with you separately."

Therefore -- and, by the way, I don't think 93A requires an arm's-length transaction, I think that the abuses that occur between businesses, regardless of where they came from or what the relationship may have been beforehand, still fall under Section 11, and that's why this -- and moreover, your Honor, this is 12(b)(6), this is the pleading that counts, as the Court has mentioned previously, and the allegations are more than sufficient to make out unfair deceptive practices.

I wanted to add just one final thing. My sister's papers talk about, um, how this 93A claim is only an alternative to our common law claims. But as I suspect the Court remembers no doubt better than I do, in **Slaney** 

and **Westwood Auto**, the Massachusetts court, um, it was very explicit that 93A created new substantive rights by making conduct unlawful which was not unlawful under the common law or any prior statute.

So by asserting this claim, your Honor, that means that the facts allege, even if they don't rise to the level of satisfying the requirements for the torts that we've alleged, may still rise to being an unfair deceptive practice, because I say it's something that we've -- that has been a broken area of law at least in years somewhat gone by, but we haven't forgotten them. I think I've taken my time, your Honor. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you very much.

All right, here's the Court's order. The motion to dismiss is denied in part and allowed in part. It's denied as to, um, the count for breach of contract and estoppel. It's denied as to the breach of the covenant of good faith and fair dealing insofar as there is a claim that they interfered with his performance under the so-called "contract," um, Cari's performance. It's denied as to fraudulent misrepresentation based upon the term sheet and those particular allegations that are set forth in quotes. It's allowed as to negligent misrepresentation. It's allowed as to the violation of General Laws 93A.

The Court believes that the choice of law need not be definitively resolved at this stage, but a written order is appropriate, and so I'm going to take that under advisement and address it. If, in the discipline of writing, I come to revise any of the rulings I've just made, I reserve the right to revise them.

Now, with the case going forward, let's see if we can spare you the need for a 16.1 conference and I'll touch on the points of that conference so we don't have to come back.

Do you want to try this before a magistrate judge and a jury? And you've got to both agree and I don't care.

(Laughter.)

THE COURT: I mean I really don't care.

MS. DOWNEY: I just have not conferred with the client about those matters, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right, you've got to confer among yourselves within two weeks. You can let me know.

When do you want to try it? The latest you can try it is in April of 2020. You'll go on the running trial list. But I can do it a lot faster than that.

MR. GILLESPIE: Well we can take some discovery, your Honor. I can tell you my calendar is good in April of 2020.

(Laughter.)

THE COURT: Well how about that?

MS. DOWNEY: I have to talk to the client, your Honor, we haven't talked about trial schedule at all.

THE COURT: Well, you know, with all respect you should have. When you come to court you ought to know something about your case, because I'm trying to save you money here.

MS. DOWNEY: I understand, your Honor.

THE COURT: It's on the running trial list for April, 2020. Within two weeks time you file a joint proposed case management schedule.

Some idiosyncrasies in a case management schedule. One, the latest date for the filing of motions for summary judgment has got to be three months before the trial month. And, um, I am very strict on experts. Under Rule 702, you file the export reports, you know the rules say that they -- you have to list all the places the expert has been retained, all the cases, and I want docket numbers so the other side can go look them up. And also you have to do the payment arrangements.

But here's the particular concern. No expert under 702 is going to testify to anything that's not in the expert report. That's not limited to 20 pages. And

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you pass it up when the expert takes the stand. And
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     it's an evidentiary objection on the part of the other
     side. You can say "Object, not in the expert report."
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     I thumb through, if the expert is qualified, I say, "She
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     may testify in accordance with the report." But she's
     got to -- she doesn't have to read it, but she's got to
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     stick to the report.
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           All right, that's the order. And we'll call the
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     next case.
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                (Ends, 2:30 p.m.)
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CERTIFICATE I, RICHARD H. ROMANOW, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER, do hereby certify that the foregoing record is a true and accurate transcription of my stenographic notes before Judge William G. Young, on Tuesday, March 5, 2019, to the best of my skill and ability. /s/ Richard H. Romanow 3-20-19 RICHARD H. ROMANOW Date